

REMARKS

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1-3 and 13-15 have been amended. Claims 16-22 have been added. Claims 4-12 were previously cancelled. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

The unoriginal claims numbered 12-14 when added in the last Amendment should have been numbered claims 13-15. The body of the September 24, 2002 Office Action refers to these claims as claims 12-14. The cover sheet of the Office Action refers to these claims as claims 13-15. These claims have been renumbered as claims 13-15.

Claims 1-3, and 13-22 are now pending and under consideration.

ENTRY OF AMENDMENT UNDER 37 CFR § 1.116

Applicant requests entry of this Rule 116 Response because:

(a) the amendments were not earlier presented because the Applicant believed in good faith that the cited prior art did not disclose the present invention as previously claimed; and

(b) the amendments do not significantly alter the scope of the claims and place the application at least into a better form for purposes of appeal.

The Manual of Patent Examining Procedures sets forth in Section 714.12 that "any amendment that would place the case either in condition for allowance or in better form for appeal may be entered." Moreover, Section 714.13 sets forth that "the Proposed Amendment should be given sufficient consideration to determine whether the claims are in condition for allowance and/or whether the issues on appeal are simplified." The Manual of Patent Examining Procedures further articulates that the reason for any non-entry should be explained expressly in the Advisory Action.

PRESENT INVENTION

One aspect of the present invention relates to a chat client concentrating or displaying together chat messages of two different chat networks. With previous chat clients, a different chat area or chat window has been used for each separate chat network. In another aspect, the

present invention can also be used to switch between active chat channels in different (or the same) chat network by selecting a corresponding displayed message from among the messages of the two chat networks that are displayed together.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 USC § 103

In the Office Action, claims 1-3 and 12-14 (now claims 13-15) were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious in view of Redpath. This rejection is traversed and reconsideration is requested.

CHAT NETWORKS

It is initially noted that the claims have been amended to clarify that the present claims refer to "chat networks", rather than data networks (e.g. a TCP/IP network). Chat systems and chat clients typically operate through a data network. However, the term "network" also describes logically distinct chat channel groupings. For example, DALNet and IRCNet are separate chat networks with their own channel space - set of unique chat channels. A chat or IRC network is generally a group of servers that share the chat messages of the chat network; clients may communicate using two different servers in the same chat network.

The term "chat network" is supported by the specification at least at page 5, lines 1-5 ("the IRC *network* is defined as a logical network formed in units of services offered to users of the chat system 30, and is different from a physical network"). The term "chat network" is not necessarily limited to an IRC chat network, but also describes other chat protocols or instant messaging protocols.

The "networks" cited in the rejection are data networks, such as TCP/IP networks. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3, and 13-15 is respectfully requested.

A DISCRETE DISPLAY AREA FOR DISPLAYING MESSAGES OF TWO CHAT NETWORKS

Claim 1 recites "obtaining ... messages, at least some of which are transmitted to or received from a first of the at least two chat networks, and at least some of which are transmitted to or received from a second of the at least two chat networks; and displaying, with the client, the obtained messages in a first discrete display area". Because the "obtained" messages are displayed in the discrete area, message of both chat networks are displayed in the discrete display area. In other words, a chat client displays chat messages corresponding to at least two

different chat networks in a single discrete display area. The term "discrete" indicates the use of a single user interface element, for example a textbox, a window, a GUI object, etc.

In contrast, Redpath controls how text of a chat session or channel is displayed during message composition. Redpath does not concern or discuss multiple chat networks, and therefore cannot teach the feature discussed above.

Claims 2 and 3 recite features similar to those discussed above. Claims 13-15 recite a client "obtaining a plurality of messages" of "at least two chat networks", and "independently displaying the concentrated messages together in a discrete display area".

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3 and 13-15 is further respectfully requested.

NEW DEPENDENT CLAIMS

The new dependent claims are deemed patentable due at least to their dependence from allowable independent claims. These claims are also patentable due to their recitation of independently distinguishing features. For example, claim 16 recites "displaying messages of both chat networks in the discrete display area independent of another display area for displaying messages of only one of the chat networks". Claim 17 recites that the area for displaying the messages of the two chat networks is "separate from another display area that is dedicated to the active chat network". Claim 19 recites a similar feature, and claim 20 recites setting an active chat channel by selecting a corresponding one of the combined/concentrated/collected and displayed messages. These features are not taught or suggested by the prior art. Allowance of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

NEW INDEPENDENT CLAIMS

Claims 21 and 22 recite features related to changing or setting an active chat network. The prior art does not discuss or suggest this feature. This feature is supported in the present specification at least at page 16, line 7.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is

requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please AMEND the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 32, as follows:

During information exchange in, for example, a chat system, a user who is participating in the communication does not always have to proffer his/her opinion. However, the user is only allowed to participate in messages transmitted from other users when actively a part of the common communication field. An application interface for a chat system is provided in, for example, (Japanese Published Unexamined Patent Application No. HEI 10-154117). A communication field in which users proffer therein opinions, and a communication field in which users only refer to messages of other users, can be displayed for identification. Messages in the "opinion" communication field can be transmitted and received while monitoring the contents of messages issued in the "refer" communication field.

Please AMEND the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 14, as follows:

The present invention also enables the display area to be reduced, for example, in a chat system, by providing a message display concentrating and independently displaying the contents of messages transmitted and received in one or a plurality of common communication fields designated by a user. The present invention also enables issuance of opinions to the common communication field, to which such issuance of opinions is easily made, by instructing the opinion displayed on the message display.

Please AMEND the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 3, as follows:

The message display means 20 includes, for example, the cooperation request transmitting means 21, a notified message receiving means 22, a display processing means 23, a message transmission processing means 24 and the setting information storing memory [35] 25.

Please AMEND the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 10, as follows:

The display areas 300 and 310 of the chat system 30 include tool bar display areas 300-1 and 310-1, respectively, for instructing, for example, various manipulations of the displayed [date] data with a pointing device 12, channel switching instructing areas 300-2 and 310-2 for switching the channel for sending a message, main-channel display areas 300-3 and 310-3 for displaying a message transmitted and/or received by the channel (hereinafter referred to as a main-channel) for sending a message, message input areas 300-5 and 310-5 for transmitting a message to the main channel, user list display areas 300-4 and 310-4 for displaying a list of users connected to the main-channel, sub-channel display areas 300-6 and 310-6 for displaying the contents of a message transmitted and/or received by other channels (hereinafter referred to as a sub-channel) designated by a user and channel list display areas 300-7 and 310-7 for displaying a list of the main-channel and sub-channel designated by the user.

Please AMEND the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 6, as follows:

Hence, a [use] user can designate which message should be displayed on the display area 200 for easy access.

Please AMEND the paragraph beginning at page 17, line 5, as follows:

In another embodiment, it is a precondition that all messages transmitted and/or received by the chat system 30 are notified to the message display means 20, while still being able to identify the cooperated IRC network and channel. In this case, the cooperation request transmitting means 30 displays an image urging users to designate the cooperated IRC network name and the channel name. The cooperation request transmitting means [30] 21 then notifies the chat system 30, and the channel name designated by user, of the IRC network name. The request receiving means 31, of the chat system 30, registers the notified IRC network name and the channel name to the setting information storing memory 35. Thereafter, the message receiving means 33, or message notifying means 32, judges when the message is received, the IRC network and channel to which the message is transmitted and notifies the message to the message display means 20 via the message notifying means 32 for those considered as the cooperation object. Thereby, selection of messages can be conducted using the IRC network name and the channel name as the keyword.